

The Claims

Claims 1-5. (Canceled).

6. (Currently amended) One or more computer-readable media having stored thereon a plurality of instructions that, when executed by one or more processors of a computer that is part of a plurality of computers in a network, causes the one or more processors to perform the following acts:

selecting a portion of file information corresponding to a file stored on one of the plurality of computers;

comparing, for each of the plurality of computers, the selected portion to a portion of a computer identifier associated with the computer;

identifying which of the computer identifiers have portions matching the selected portion of the file information; ~~and~~

communicating, for identification of potentially identical files stored on the plurality of computers, the file information to each of the computers associated with a computer identifier having a portion matching the selected portion of the file information; and

wherein a value W represents the size of the portion of the file information,
wherein a value M represents a count of computers that the one computer is aware
of in the network, wherein a value R is a system configuration value calculated
based on an average number of computers that a particular file identifier should be
communicated to, wherein \lg is a base 2 logarithm function, wherein floor
brackets indicate the largest integer that is no greater than the enclosed value, and
wherein the value W is determined as follows:

$$W = \left\lfloor \lg \frac{M}{R} \right\rfloor.$$

7. (Original) One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 6, wherein the selected portion of the file information comprises a set of least significant bits of the file information.

8. (Original) One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 6, wherein for each of the plurality of computers the portion of the computer identifier associated with the computer is a set of least significant bits of the computer identifier.

9. (Original) One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 6, wherein the comparing includes comparing the selected portion to a portion of a computer identifier associated with the one computer.

10. (Original) One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 6, wherein the selected portion of the file information includes a plurality of bits of the file information, wherein each portion of a computer identifier includes a plurality of bits of the computer identifier, and wherein the locations of the plurality of bits in the file information correspond to the locations of the plurality of bits of the computer identifiers.

11. (Original) One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 6, further comprising:

receiving, from one of the plurality of computers, other file information;

comparing the received file information to a file information database stored at the computer; and

determining that a file corresponding to the received file information is potentially identical to another file on another of the plurality of computers if the received file information matches file information in the database.

12. (Original) One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 6, wherein the file information is a semi-unique value based at least in part on the data in the file.

13. (Original) One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 12, wherein the file information includes a hash value generated by applying a hash function to the file.

14. (Original) One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 6, wherein the file information is based at least in part on one or more characteristics of the file.

15. (Original) One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 14, wherein the characteristics include a file size and a file type.

16. (Original) One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 6, wherein the communicating further comprises communicating a file identifier corresponding to the file along with the file information.

17. (Canceled).

18. (Canceled).

19. (Canceled) One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 6, further comprising:

determining a size of the portion of the file information;

wherein the size of the portion of the file information need not be the same as a size determined by others of the plurality of computers.

20. (Canceled).

21. (Original) One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 6, further comprising repeating the selecting, comparing, identifying, and communicating for every file stored at the one computer.

22. (Original) One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 6, further comprising repeating the selecting, comparing, identifying, and communicating for every file stored at the one computer that exceeds a threshold size.

Claims 23-97. (Canceled).